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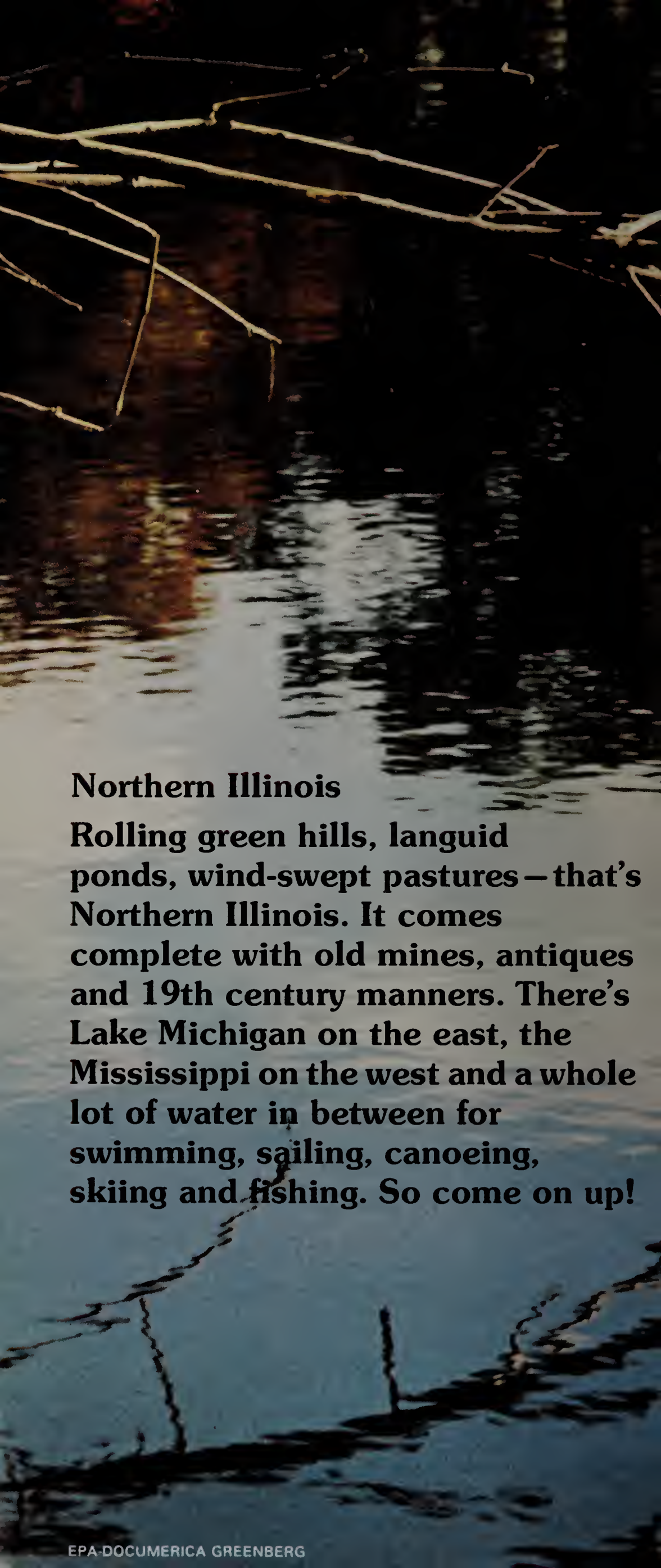


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Northern Illinois

Rolling green hills, languid ponds, wind-swept pastures – that's Northern Illinois. It comes complete with old mines, antiques and 19th century manners. There's Lake Michigan on the east, the Mississippi on the west and a whole lot of water in between for swimming, sailing, canoeing, skiing and fishing. So come on up!

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The glaciers gave Northern Illinois a lot of ups and downs, many of them filled with water, all of them easy on the eyes.

Glaciers dug Illinois' largest concentration of natural lakes, the Chain O'Lakes, conveniently close to Chicago. Meltwaters draining over a soft sandstone faultline carved the plunging gorges, canyons and waterfalls of Starved Rock and Matthiessen State Parks. A forty-eight foot statue of Chief Black Hawk towers 200 feet over the Rock River, a river that some have called the "Hudson of the West."

John Deere tamed the sticky prairie soil when he stood in his Grand Detour blacksmith shop and hammered out a self-polishing steel plow. Now that shop is the birthplace of a machinery empire, and the grounds surrounding it offer a sample of 19th century farm life.

Just one chunk of Illinois remained unscathed by glacial ice. The sharply etched far northwest is the highest country in the state and has some of the best slopes for skiing. Up there, the soil is several million years older and thinner. Once lead was so close to the surface, French explorers Jolliet and Marquette noted Indians mining it with the most primitive tools. Not too long after, Galena boomed as a mining and steam-boating center . . . until the mines proved shallow, the railroad came and U.S. Grant went to war and to Washington.

If time hasn't stood still in Galena, it's at least slowed down to a comfortable walk. The brick streets ramble steeply up and down. They're lined with elegant old 19th century homes and a treasure trove of antique shops. But Galena isn't the only place to find old things. Antique-hunting is well rewarded in Long Grove, Richmond, Frankfort and Libertyville. Search all around the Rockford area and near Geneva and St. Charles in the Fox River Valley.

▽ Fog engulfs river traffic



△ (Above) There are many spots for fine skiing
△ Past pleasures in Long Grove



◁ Chief Black Hawk surveys the Rock River, Oregon

▽ Birthplace of a machinery empire, Grand Detour



HEDRICH-BLESSING



◁ Galena rises on five levels

▽ Spend a day hiking river roads



△ Launch a canoe on Fox River

△ (Center) River view, Mississippi Palisades State Park

△ Camp lakeside sites for a weekend or week

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